

Why?

וַתֵּרֶד בֵּת פַּרְעֹה לְרוֹיֵץ עַל הַיָּאֵר וַנְּעַרְתֶּיהָ הַלֵּכֶת עַל יַד הַיָּאֵר וַתֵּרָא אֶת הַתִּבְיָה בְּתוֹךְ הַסּוּף
וַתִּשְׁלַח אֶת אַמָּתָהּ וַתִּקְוֶזָה:
(שמות ב:ה)

The daughter of Pharaoh went down to wash in the Nile, and her ladies were walking along the Nile. She saw the basket in the reeds, and sent forth her amah and took it.

(Exodus 2:5)

ותשלח את אמתה ותקחה – ר' יהודה ור' נחמיה, חד אמר: ידה, וחד אמר: שפחתה. מ"ד ידה, דכתיב: אמתה; ומ"ד שפחתה, מדלא כתיב ידה. ולמ"ד שפחתה, הא אמרת: בא גבריאלי וחבטן בקרקע! דשייר לה חדא, דלאו אורחא דבת מלכא למיקם לחודה. ולמאן דאמר ידה, ליכתוב ידה! הא קמ"ל, דאישתרבב אישתרבובי, דאמר מר: וכן אתה מוצא באמתה של בת פרעה (סוטה יב:)

And she sent forth her amah and took it: Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Nechemiah [debated the interpretation of this verse]. One said her amah refers to her hand, and the other said it refers to her maidservant. One that says it refers to her hand because it says her amah, while the other interprets it as a reference to her maidservant because it does not say yadah. According to the one who says it refers to her maidservant, we already learned that the angel Gavriel killed her [for trying to convince the princess to kill him, so there was no maidservant left]! There was another maidservant remaining, because it is not appropriate for a princess to remain alone. According to the one who says it refers to her hand, why doesn't it say yadah? It changes the wording to teach us that her hand extended itself, as the master taught [just like the scepter of Achashveirosh extended itself towards Esther], similarly you find regarding the arm of the daughter of Pharaoh.

(Sotah 12b)

וּמֹשֶׁה הָיָה רֹעֵה אֶת צֹאן יִתְרוֹ זִוְתָנּוּ כִּהְיָן מִדְיָן וַיִּנָּהֵג אֶת הַצֹּאן אַחֲרֵי הַמִּדְבָּר וַיָּבֵא אֶל הַר
הָאֱלֹהִים זִוְרָבָה: וַיֵּרָא מִלְאָךְ יְקֹנֵק אֵלָיו בְּלִבַּת אֵשׁ מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּיָּה וַיֵּרָא וְהָיָה הַסִּיָּה בַעֲרֵי בָאֵשׁ
וְהַסִּיָּה אֵינָנּוּ אֶפְלִי: וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶסְרָה נָא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת הַמַּרְאֶה הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה מִדַּוְעַי לֹא יִבְעַר
הַסִּיָּה: וַיֵּרָא יְקֹנֵק כִּי סָר לְרֵאוֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֱלֹהִים מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּיָּה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר
הַיָּי: (שמות ג:א-ד)

And Moshe was shepherding the flock of Yisro, his father-in-law, the Kohen of Midian. And he directed the flock after the desert, and arrived at the mountain of God towards Chorev. An angel of God appeared to him in a flame of fire from inside the bush, and he saw that the bush was burning with fire but the bush was not being consumed. Moshe said, "Now, I will turn, and see this great sight, why is the bush not burning?" God saw that he turned to see, and God called to him from within the bush and said, "Moshe Moshe." And he said, "Here I am."

(Exodus 3:1-4)

It is amazing what a difference a little effort makes.

According to one explanation of *chazal*, the arm of the daughter of Pharaoh miraculously extended itself to reach baby Moshe's basket that was floating in the water. One wonders what the significance of this unusual occurrence is. Why did Hashem go out of His way to use this unusual language to point out this miracle?

We have mentioned in the past that everything is in the hands of Heaven, except for the fear of Heaven¹. We have *free will*, but not *free action*. The will to do what is correct, to try to do what is appropriate, is completely and totally in our hands. Whether or not we will ultimately be successful in carrying out that will and desire, is not completely in our hands.

A consequence of this fact, is that we are required sometimes to attempt the impossible. We see that it is, almost, guaranteed that we will fail – nonetheless, we are required to *try*. That is our free will, to try. If we do not try, we fail. If we do try, but we fail to accomplish, we succeed².

The daughter of Pharaoh could not possibly have reached the floating basket containing baby Moshe, and nonetheless, she tried. In response to her desire and attempt, Hashem allowed her success; her arm miraculously extended. I think that this is one critical message in this *Midrash*.

More impressive is the lesson embedded in the beginning of the prophetic relationship between Moshe and Hashem. The verse explicitly states, “*God saw that he turned to see, and God called to him from within the bush.*” Why is it important to tell us that Moshe turned to see the (un)burning bush, and that God saw that he turned to see it? Why doesn't the Torah simply tell us that God revealed Himself to Moshe in a fiery bush, and said etc.? Apparently, it was not so simple. God did not simply reveal Himself to Moshe. It would appear that He tested Moshe first. God wanted to see what Moshe's reaction would be to this miracle. What was his response?

Moshe says, “*Now, I will turn, and see this great sight, why (madua) is the bush not burning?*”

I had a revelation this morning (Teves 20, 5770). I was struggling to understand the difference between the word *madua* and *lamah*. They both seem to mean *why*. However, I think there is a distinction between *madua* and *lamah*. *Lamah* is NOT a question, it is a statement, often an accusation. *Madua*, on the other hand, indicates an actual questioning of the action or behavior. *Madua* demands an explanation, *lamah* does not. Take a look, there are ten places in *Chumash* that *madua* appears and forty-six places that *lamah* appears. I would appreciate your feedback on this (etanmoshe@yahoo.com).

1. Berachos 33b, Meggilah 25a, Niddah 16b.

2. Berachos 6a, Shabbos 63a, Kiddushin 40a: Whomever thought to perform a *mitzvah* but was prevented, it is considered as if he did it.

Moshe was not satisfied with an amazing sight. He wanted to understand, he was curious, he took nothing for granted. He tried to understand *everything*. Later in his life, when he saw that he had found favor in the eyes of God, he even requested to know the hidden ways of God Himself and even to be shown His glory (see Exodus 33 verses 13 and 18).

When God saw that he turned to see, that he wanted to understand, that he tried to understand – only then did God reveal Himself to Moshe. One shudders to think what would have been had Moshe reacted like most of us would – wow, cool, an (un)burning bush! Get the video camera! That is *lumah* not *madua*. We need to seek the purpose, the meaning, the significance in *everything* we see. We may not always be successful, but we have to try. All the daughter of Pharaoh did was *try* to reach the unreachable. All Moshe did was go a bit out of his way to try to understand the un-understandable. God saw that he tried, that he went out of his way – and God responded, allowing the accomplishment.

I think that two concrete messages need to be taken from here. First, that we need to try harder to see God everywhere and in everything that we do (this is why there are so many blessings to be made all day long – to help us with this!), by questioning, wondering and thinking. Second, that when we need to act, for whatever reason, sometimes the honor of Heaven is at stake, even when it may seem impossible to accomplish anything, we must try³. That is all that is up to us, and that is our responsibility. Hashem will respond, in the way He deems appropriate.

It is amazing what a little effort can do.

3. For an extreme example, see the comments of Rav Chaim Shmulevitz in *Sichas Mussar* to the attempt of Tamar to get Yehudah to perform *yibum*. She pretended to be a harlot in a desperate attempt to accomplish this *mitzvah*. Everyone questions how Yehudah could do such a thing, but no one ever questions what in the world *she* was thinking! Did she really think this would work? She had to try.
